

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Washington State Projects



2014 – 2015 Projects Palouse River Watershed (WRIA 34) Implementation Partnership

Lead partner: Palouse Conservation District

Through implementation of the Palouse River Watershed Management Plan, more than 15 partners will work with producers to address water quality concerns and reduce water quality regulatory action on producers in this area of Washington and Idaho. One innovative project component includes the promotion of the Farmed SMART certification program, which provides an opportunity for environmental markets.

Precision Conservation for Salmon and Water Quality in the Puget Sound

Lead Partner: Washington State Conservation Commission

The Puget Sound is the second largest estuary in the United States, and one of the most productive for salmon and shellfish. Partners will use an ecosystem-wide process for targeting high priority areas in the Puget Sound to improve water quality and habitat for at-risk species, including Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead.

Upper Columbia Irrigation Enhancement Project

Lead partner: Trout Unlimited, Inc.

This project will help fund irrigation efficiency improvements with large irrigators and irrigation districts to modernize water delivery

infrastructure. Enhanced instream flows will benefit critical spawning and rearing areas for Endangered Species Act (ESA) fish and provide passage during migration during seasonal low flows in critical Upper Columbia Tributaries. This project enhances existing conservation plans in the region and accelerates their implementation. Water savings from the efficiency improvements will be placed back into the Washington State Trust Water Right Program.



Yakama Nation On- Reservation Lower Yakima Basin Restoration Project

Lead Partner: Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

This project addresses critical needs for the integrated conservation and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, water quantity, and water quality on the Yakama Reservation in the lower Yakima River basin project. This project will also benefit multiple aquatic and riparian species, including Chinook and sockeye salmon, Pacific lamprey, and important cultural plant species.

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project (216)

Lead partner: Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation

The project focuses on reducing soil erosion and stream sediment by repairing or removing stream crossings, decommissioning forest roads, installing road drainage and protecting wetland/riparian areas. In addition, this project will improve range conditions through feral horse management and improve wildlife habitat for the sharp-tailed grouse and Columbia River redband trout.

Unlocking Carbon Markets for NIPF Landowners in the Pacific Northwest Project (516)

Lead partner: Pinchot Institute

By aggregating landowners into groups, the American Carbon Registry (ACR) reduces transaction costs for carbon credit trading and allows small producers to participate. This project will target approximately 250 non-industrial private forest landowners in Oregon and Washington who wish to participate in a regional carbon crediting program and who possess lands in NRCS and state priority areas as defined in regional conservation strategies. Targeted parcels will be between 75 and 4,000 acres in size, with the majority being less than 250 acres. NRCS and partner assistance will cover much of the initial expense of participating in carbon projects, specifically the development of a forest management plan and subsequent implementation of pre-commercial thinning to enhance carbon stocks.



2016 Projects

Greater Spokane River Watershed Implementation

Lead Partner: Spokane Conservation District

Significant sources of sediments and nutrients are carried to the Spokane River watershed by its larger tributaries, and low dissolved oxygen levels and algae blooms threaten aquatic life in the Spokane River, Lake Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Lake. Reducing nutrients is key to resolving water quality degradation throughout the Greater Spokane River Bi-State Watershed. TMDL and lake management implementation plans stress the need to address agriculture and forestry within these watersheds. This project supports regional momentum towards adoption of conservation tillage operations and best management practices. Tens of thousands of agricultural and forestry acres, including a tribal farm, will benefit through voluntary NRCS programs. Wildlife and fish habitat will be protected and long-term easements will be developed for several forest and wetland acquisitions. In addition, this project will introduce a new program that involves using the Risk Management Insurance models to compensate producers for the loss of productive land entered into vegetative buffers. This new commodity buffer program is designed to bridge the financial gap in current cost-share programs and encourage producers to cooperatively implement these practices on their farms. Project success will be evaluated by extensive watershed based field monitoring to track improvements in water, soil and habitat.

WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery & Water Quality

Lead Partner: Whatcom Conservation District

The Nooksack watershed is in the top three percent of agricultural producing counties in the nation and has threatened or salmon species and imperiled shellfish harvest areas. Partners have recruited twenty-two landowners ready to implement priority projects remedying inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife in the Nooksack River watershed in North Puget Sound, Washington State. Partners will work with producers to: replace culverts on farm access roads, restoring fish passages in agricultural and rural areas; work

with Tribes to construct instream wooden structures to provide habitat for salmon; and integrate and publicize NRCS programs into the rural, agricultural and Tribal communities. The result will be higher priority and more strategic projects to recover salmon and improve water quality in downstream commercial, ceremonial and subsistence shellfish beds operated by the Lummi Nation.

2017 Projects

Puyallup Watershed Partnership

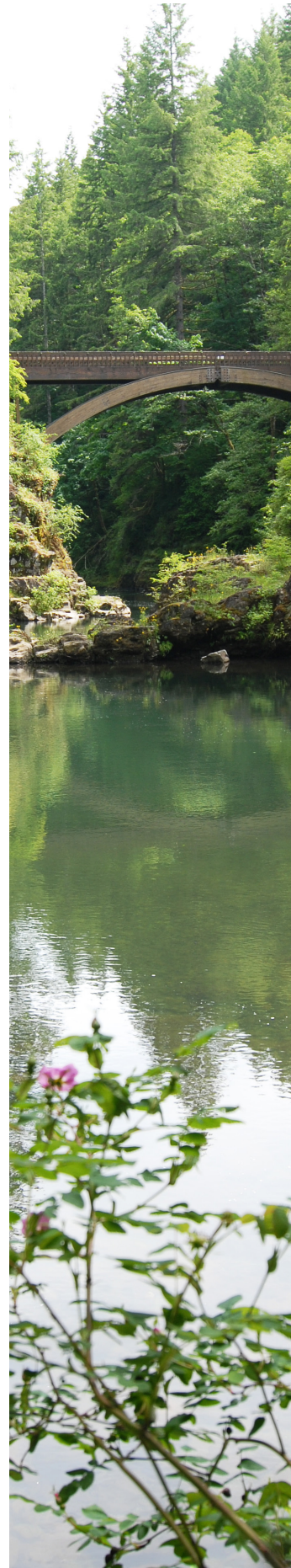
Lead Partner: Pierce Conservation District

Through the Puyallup Watershed Partnership, the Pierce Conservation District and ten diverse partners will assist landowners with permanent conservation easements and implement restoration activities through Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding assistance. The Puyallup in Washington contains the only remaining prime soils in Pierce County, is home to one of the most urban tribal reservations, and provides essential habitat for Endangered Species Act listed species of coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Since 2002, Pierce County has lost almost 10,000 acres of farmland, nearly five times the state average, due to rapidly encroaching development from the Seattle/Tacoma metropolitan area. That loss not only impacts farmers and food security but also diminishes the ecosystem benefits that farmland provides to water and soil quality.

Yakima Integrated Plan - Toppenish to Teanaway

Lead Partner: Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

The Yakima Integrated Plan will accelerate the recovery of threatened Middle Columbia steelhead by targeting high priority watersheds which currently produce more than 50% of the wild steelhead run in the Yakima River Basin. These actions will also increase water supply and water quality for environmental, economic and cultural purposes. This project will fund actions supported by diverse partners to enact holistic, innovative solutions to natural resource conservation issues. These actions will restore fish habitat in over 50 miles of channels across 2,500



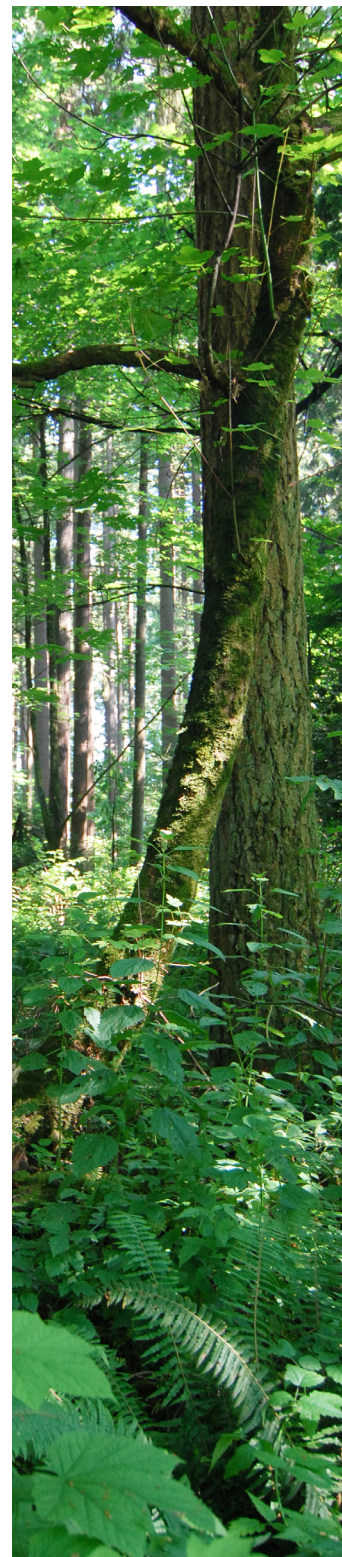


acres; restore riparian vegetation on over 10 miles of stream banks; enhance fish access to over 480 acres of aquatic habitat; increase water retention in 2,000 acres of ephemeral channels; and improve grazing management across 3,500 floodplain acres and 34,000 upland grazing acres. In addition, the project will target over 30,000 acres for irrigation efficiency enhancements, over 25,000 acres for Conservation Stewardship practices and protect 500 acres of floodplain farmland through easements. Monitoring of these actions will occur through existing programs. The project stems from extensive collaborative efforts in recent years by Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Workgroup, which represents over 20 stakeholders from environmental, agricultural, and tribal interests working to restore habitat and conserve water resources in the Yakima Basin.

Southwest Washington Non-industrial Private Forest Conservation Partnership

Lead Partner: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Non-industrial private forest lands in southwest Washington are important to the regional and state economies. In addition to timber harvest, these working forests provide many functions including: fish and wildlife habitat, protection of water quality, flood reduction, recreational opportunities and carbon sequestration to help combat climate change. The project area includes Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Lewis Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz and Clark Counties. Washington Department of Natural Resources and conservation districts will conduct outreach and education activities and provide technical assistance to NIPF owners to develop and implement stewardship plans with funding from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program. Washington State Conservation Commission will distribute NRCS technical assistance funding to the conservation districts. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will administer the RCPP and assess fish and wildlife habitat and species presence on lands enrolled in the Healthy Forests Reserve Program and other participating lands with willing owners. The HFRP program will be focused in the Chehalis watershed and includes provisions for conservation easements and habitat restoration to benefit marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl. Program participants could have multiple options for regulatory certainty by implementing conservation practices. Participating landowners will provide at least 25% cost share to match implementation funding from NRCS. Projects funded by the RCPP will improve fish and wildlife habitat, protect water quality, improve forest resiliency in the face climate change, and help meet regulatory requirements while keeping working forests working.



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